

1. Examine the significance of soil as a resource. What are the threats to the soil wealth in India? Discuss.

Approach

Candidates need to write about the importance significance of the soil as a resources. And then highlight in short the threats to the soil wealth in India.

Introduction

According to recently released Global Soil Biodiversity Atlas prepared by WWF India among nations that face grave danger to soil biodiversity.

Body

Soil is very important and a valuable resource for every human being. Soil is the mixture of rock debris and organic materials, which develop on the earth's surface.

Significance of soil as a resources:

- The fertile soil helps in the growth and development of the plants. The plants thus produced are healthy and provide food, clothing, furniture, and medicines.
- It supports many life forms including bacteria, fungi, algae, etc. These microbes, in turn, maintain environmental balance by retaining the moisture and decaying the dead organisms.
- The topsoil supports certain life activities such as reproduction, hatching, nesting, breeding, etc. of a few organisms.
- The organic matter present in the soil increases the fertility of the soil which is responsible for the growth of the plants. It also contains certain minerals and elements that are necessary for the plants to carry out their cellular activities.

Threats to the soil wealth in India:

- Declining Soil Fertility: Apart from natural factors such as floods, volcanoes and earthquakes, a number of human-induced factors such as deforestation, ill management of industrial wastes, overgrazing by cattle, and urban expansion, are also responsible for the loss of soil's productive capacity.
- Agri exploitation: Overuse of chemical fertilisers on soil, excessive tillage, jettisoning of age-old organic soil revival practices and lack of appropriate crop rotation.

Conclusion

Soils are Degraded which threatens human livelihood and very existence. Thus, the need is to reverse the trend by sustainable soil management in agriculture, development and so on. There is a need to collaborate at state, national and international level.

2. Marine resources can become the lifeline of coastal economy and livelihood. In this light, do a SWOT analysis of India's marine resources.

Approach

Students are expected to write about the marine resources with India explain how it's lifeline for coastal economy and then do the swot analysis various strengths weakness of India's marine resources.

Introduction

With an exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 2.02 million sq.km and a long coastline of 8,118 km with rich and diverse marine living resources. There is need to focus on utilisation of wealth from the marine and other aquatic resources of the country for improving the lives and livelihoods of fishermen and their families.

Body

Marine resources as lifeline for coastal economy and livelihood:

- Employment generation: It will provide jobs, improve livelihoods of many. This will help in inclusive growth. E.g improving fishery resources exploitation can provide livelihood to many.
- Food security: It will lead to food security through fishery sector and other sea food resources. It would also help in reducing malnutrition issue in India as fishes are good source of nutrition.
- Essential mineral: Seawater contains economically useful salts such as gypsum and common salt. Gypsum is useful in various industries.
- Efficient transportation and logistics: Indian Ocean is a major gateway of trade with 80% of global oil trade happening through it. Better connectivity in the region will significantly cut the transport cost and will reduce logistics inefficiencies.

Weakness and threat:

- Much of these resources, however, are not easily accessible, so their recovery involves technological challenges and high cost.
- Extinction of a species affects other species is accelerating the extinction of more species through a chain reaction.
- Drilling in these oceanic deposits could destabilize the seabed, causing vast swaths of sediment to slide for miles down the continental slope.
- Tsunamis, cyclones, hurricanes typhoons etc. leave thousands of people stranded and property worth millions destroyed.

Opportunity:

- Reducing marine pollution and debris including from land-based activities.
- Promoting sustainable exploitation of marine resources.
- Halting the destruction of marine resources especially through acidification.
- Eliminating harmful subsidies that promote fishing overcapacity.

Conclusion

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 14), calls to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. India should expedite its efforts to exploit oceanic resources in Indian Ocean. What is required is use of technology to exploit oceanic resources in Indian Ocean with government Blue growth initiative. India has rightly launched O-SMART scheme aiming at regulated use of oceans, marine resources for sustainable development in this direction.

3. What are the emerging security risks in the Indo-Pacific? How is India strategizing to counter those? Discuss.

Approach-

Candidates need to explain the emerging security risks in the Indo-Pacific. Also discuss how is India strategizing to counter those.

Introduction:

The different reactions in Asia to the Russian invasion will affect a geopolitical landscape already experiencing a deep transformation taking place around the concept of the Indo-Pacific. The war in Ukraine might also divert the EU's interest in

the short term but there is consensus on the fact that the Indo-Pacific will still be among its priorities.

What are the emerging security risks in the Indo-Pacific?

- It is relatively accepted today (primarily among Western nations) that the Indo-Pacific has no set strategy to contain China, the containment concept has largely been driven by China's rise and its aggressive expansion.
- Indo Pacific is the confluence of both these oceans and the ever-increasing maritime trade that brings the nation-states together irrespective of their ideological differences or dogmatic changes.
- The liberal trading order has encountered protectionism in the form of tariff and non- tariff barriers.
- The cheaper imports from China are on a steady growing scale which is not appealing for the domestic economy in developing economies.
- One cannot argue for increased imports from China as this directly jeopardizes the trading and services in the domestic economy. Looming trade war tensions although quite on the downswing owing to many other vital international attentions.

How is India strategizing to counter those?

- The idea of a free and inclusive Indo Pacific stands to promote trade and simultaneously extends its strategic vision upon the security concerns of the littorals.
- Being a major power in the region and at the same time having a greater chunk of Indian Ocean to be on its controlled maritime zone provides India with the strategic advantage to be a rule maker rather than a rule follower in the region.
- India's role in the Indo-Pacific is considered crucial by countries such as Australia, Japan, and the United States. However, despite New Delhi's presence in the Indian Ocean, maritime security has actually remained outside of India's strategic interests, concerns, and thinking, due to its continental threats.
- The Indo-Pacific therefore is a new domain in India's foreign policy engagements, representing a shift in New Delhi's strategic environment—expanding its threats solely from its continental borders to its maritime space.
- In the South Asian region, India inherited strategic advantage owing to the geopolitical privilege it enjoys by having a shared border with the maximum states in the region unlike any other power in the same region.
- This geostrategic backup has helped this great nation to be evolved as a net security provider around its strategic domain.
- One of the main reasons to be cited as a cause for India's increased engagement in the Indian ocean on the side-lines of quadrilateral

cooperation (India, USA, Japan and Australia) and the Indo-Pacific is the long due presence of the Pakistan rhetoric in its foreign policy.

- The continental way of thinking is rigorously turning towards a more maritime induced active engagement which is factually visible through the continuous engagement in these two areas.
- Providing naval assistance and ensuring smooth flow of goods and services through its controlled waters India has been protecting the status quo. The bilateral relations between both nations have also developed in diverse fields.
- Through its Indo-Pacific initiatives, along with partnering with nations to secure its strategic interests, India is now actively presenting collaborative initiatives to address regional challenges, such as infrastructure development and non-traditional threats, among others.
- At a broader level, these partnerships help India secure strategic interests, offer options to mitigate its own capacity challenges, and lend credibility toward its role and profile as a world leader in the wider geopolitical competition.

Conclusion

The Indo-Pacific construct has provided an opportunity for India to maximize its strategic interests while responding to changes in the security environment. Despite political enthusiasm between New Delhi and its partners, however, the pace of implementation and the road map to realizing the Indo-Pacific vision remains limited. As the key partners move forward, countries must acknowledge and accept that their Indo-Pacific visions will never align completely with each other. New Delhi and its partners must continue to underline the broader and foundational principles of democracy, rule of law, and other shared interests while focusing on issue-based partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.